

**USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR VALUE-
ADDED PRODUCER GRANTS**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 4, 2008 – USDA Rural Development Under Secretary Thomas C. Dorr today invited applications for grants to help agricultural producers enter into value-added activities.

“These Rural Development funds support small businesses and help producers find new markets and expanded uses for agricultural products,” Dorr said. “USDA is committed to working with rural farmers, ranchers and entrepreneurs to increase their economic opportunities and create jobs that boost the local economy.”

Awards will be made on a competitive basis. Applications must be received no later than March 31, 2008. For further details about eligibility rules and application procedures, see the January 29, 2008, *Federal Register*.

USDA Rural Development’s mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development has invested nearly \$91 billion since 2001 for equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. More than 1.7 million jobs have been created or saved through these investments. Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov> .